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Tuesday, 14 November 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Lamamra (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 47 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Valencia Rodriguez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express my delegation's appreciation to the Open-ended Working Group, which, under the chairmanship of the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Amara Essy, was able to count on the selfless work of the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Heads of State and Government adopted a historic Declaration expressing the unanimous view of the international community that

> "the Security Council must ... be expanded and its working methods reviewed in order to strengthen its capacity, increase its representative character and improve the efficiency and transparency of its working procedures". (*resolution 50/6, para. 14*)

This effort must be considered as a fundamental part of the restructuring of the United Nations that we are all working for, because the Security Council, as the main executive organ of the Organization, is the first to be called upon to take account of the consequences of the end of the cold war, the democratization process spreading around the world, and the need to strengthen the Council's authority and efficacy.

The Non-Aligned Movement has stressed the general criteria that must be borne in mind in connection with this process. First, the reform and expansion of the Council should be considered as a whole and as part of a single initiative. Secondly, the major principles that must be observed as this effort unfolds are the equal sovereignty of States and equitable geographical distribution. Thirdly, the objectives that must be pursued are transparency and democratization, as well as the strengthening of the responsibility of that organ.

Under the Charter of San Francisco, the relationship between the General Assembly — the most important political forum of the international community — and the Security Council must be precisely spelled out on the basis of the annual and special reports provided for in Article 15 and of the broad competence of the General Assembly as stipulated in Article 11.

Ecuador set forth these criteria in the Assembly's general debate. We stressed that the reform and new composition of the Security Council must more appropriately reflect the current membership of the

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United Nations and the new realities of the world so that the Council can promptly and efficiently adopt early warning measures to prevent conflicts, re-establish or consolidate peace, and deploy or continue peace-keeping operations.

Ecuador set forth its criteria for increasing the membership of the Security Council, during the discussion in the plenary Assembly last year. It stated, and now reiterates, its recognition of and support for the legitimate aspirations of countries such as Brazil, Germany and Japan, as well as of regions such as Africa and Asia, to be represented on the Security Council as permanent members. We also noted that these aspirations must be evaluated on the basis of the need to abide by equitable distribution among various geographical regions, so as to correct the existing imbalance, both in the permanent and in the non-permanent Membership, that favours a single region.

The Charter stipulates that the fundamental requirement for membership in the Security Council is a Member State's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization. Consequently, becoming a member of the Security Council means not only shouldering major responsibilities for the costs of peace-keeping operations, but also contributing efficiently to the attainment of the other purposes enshrined in the Charter. Being a member of the Security Council involves great responsibilities but also entails the potential for bringing special influence to bear upon the international community.

Under Articles 24 and 25 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations, and its decisions must be carried out by all of them. Thus, while those decisions have to be taken by the Members of the Council, the other countries have to be at least duly and properly informed of them. It should be recalled that the changes designed to achieve transparency in the work of the Security Council require changes also in the rules of procedure that will facilitate prior and at least rudimentary insight into what the Council may decide.

Ecuador does not support the extension of the veto privilege to other Security Council members, because that would increase the chances of paralysis in the Council's work. It must be recognized that the veto has had its merits and its grave defects.

In the middle of the cold war it made it possible for the great Powers to join the United Nations they themselves had established. If circumstances had been different, they might not have done so or might have deserted the Organization. It saved our Organization from extinction by keeping the great Powers from becoming involved in political and armed conflicts with unforeseeable consequences or in impossible missions. It promoted a sense of responsibility among those Powers, though not always fully. It fostered recognition of the need for the Big Five to consult and reduced the risk of a grave confrontation between power politics and the valid legal norms established in the Charter.

Nobody, however, disputes the fact that the veto is an anti-democratic privilege diametrically opposed to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The circumstances that once justified its creation and retention over these 50 years have vanished. This prompts us to assert that that privilege must also cease to exist. Inasmuch as this is not realistically possible, since the Big Five are taking an inflexible posture in respect of retaining that power, we should ask them to act with a sense of responsibility attuned to current realities.

In this context, it is perhaps not too much to hope that they might voluntarily agree to restrict the use of this privilege so that it will be applied only in cases of measures envisaged in Chapter VII of the Charter with regard to maintaining and consolidating peace. This aspiration, or dream, could become a reality even by means of simple agreements between the Big Five or through minor procedural changes, thus making it unnecessary to undertake a complicated reform of the Charter.

If none of these initiatives meets with success, our remaining contingency step would perhaps be to promote only an increase in the number of non-permanent members on the basis of the principles I have just outlined. There are many proposals for attaining this end, including, for instance, the one submitted by Italy. What we cannot accept is the Council's continuing to function as it has and with a membership that does not reflect the considerable increase in the membership of the Organization.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The many changes that have taken place in our international relations must be reflected in the structures

and practices of our international Organization. The United Nations system as a whole needs to be reformed and revitalized in order to render it transparent, accountable and democratic.

On the need to reform and expand the Security Council, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, in his address on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, had this to say:

> "The Security Council, as now constituted, empowers only a small minority of the victorious allies of a war of half a century ago to continue to wield sweeping powers that enable it to take or block decisions affecting the destiny of the majority of Member States sitting in the General Assembly." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 5)*

The imbalances and inequities inherent in the present structures and practices of the Council, including permanent membership and the power of veto, defy logic and run counter to the very democratic principles and values that Member States are promoting in their domestic political practices. Permanent membership and the power of veto hold collective international decision-making hostage to the narrow interests of a privileged and powerful few. Democratization, transparency and equitable geographical representation should not be elements of dispute at all in this reform process. Ideally, and in the long term, all members of the Security Council should be elected on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical representation to ensure their accountability to the general membership of the Organization, on whose behalf, in accordance with the Charter they carry out their primary function of maintaining international peace and security.

It is regrettable that this logical and self-evident approach appears not to be acceptable to the present permanent members of the Security Council. The work done so far in the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly suggests that it will take time to tackle the issue effectively with this serious approach. In the meantime, therefore, we are forced to seek reform within the very narrow confines of outmoded structures and practices.

Proceeding from the premise that the Security Council acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations, it is logical that an expanded United Nations, which has grown from 51 Members in 1945 to the present 185, would dictate an increased membership of the Security Council if that subsidiary organ is to be representative and democratic. Debate on this issue has clearly demonstrated that the Council can no longer continue to operate as an exclusive club purporting to serve the interests of the full membership of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the permanent membership of the Council must reflect a fair geographical representation of all the regions of the world. In this regard, it is objectionable that all of Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are unrepresented and Asia is underrepresented in the permanent membership of the Council.

We believe that Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean should each have at least two permanent seats, with incumbents enjoying the same rights and privileges as the present permanent members. Additional non-permanent seats should also be allocated to each of those regions so as to ensure equitable geographical representation commensurate with the vastly increased membership of the United Nations.

The veto, which we feel should eventually be abolished, should also be reviewed in the light of the changing international circumstances. Its scope and use should be limited, perhaps to those issues which are clearly and specifically related to the maintenance of international peace and security. Even then, is it not time for a separate voting mechanism to be introduced to validate or pass a veto?

It is equally imperative that new measures and practices be introduced to improve the Council's working methods and procedures, as well as to enhance its relationship with the general membership. Specifically, we believe that a formal mechanism should be established for collaboration between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Obviously, the Security Council's submission to the General Assembly of the traditional compendia of resolutions and statements, coupled with its occasional rounds of news bulletins and briefings, falls far short of any meaningful involvement of the general membership in the decision-making process. Cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly should be promoted to foster a freer flow of information and afford greater transparency and accountability to the international community.

Many of us had expressed, and indeed cherished, the hope that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations would be an auspicious occasion for the baptism

of a reformed and expanded Security Council. Debate on this issue has already distilled, though without total agreement, the major concepts whose due consideration could endow the Security Council with a minimum reflection of the universal character of the United Nations, and the present-day realities, which call for the widest possible participation in the Council's work and decision-making process.

We believe that the current lively and heavily subscribed debate on this question bears indisputable testimony to the urgent need for the membership of the Organization to gather courage and political will and tackle head-on this long-overdue exercise.

Mr. Hamdoon (Iraq)(*interpretation from Arabic*): I take pleasure, at the outset, to wholeheartedly thank the Chairman of the Working Group and his two vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representative of Finland and the Permanent Representative of Thailand, for their unremitting efforts in guiding the activities of the Working Group on the issues of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters relating to the Security Council. Those efforts have taken tangible shape in document A/49/965.

The Working Group's discussions during the last two sessions of the General Assembly have highlighted the great importance the international community attaches to the process of reforming the Security Council and have shown how comprehensive and profound this reform is expected to be. The Member States' keen interest in this matter stems from the strong desire to safeguard the legitimacy and credibility of the Security Council and of the United Nations system as a whole. The original composition of the Security Council, its procedures and methods of work, reflect the balances of power as they existed at the end of the Second World War.

Today, fifty years later, and apart from the limited 1963 increase in the non-permanent membership of the Council, no substantive change has been introduced in the Council's composition and methods of work. This applies to the Council's rules of procedure which remain provisional and to the unlimited privileges of the five permanent members. While the international community's concern over the loose definition of the Council's competence and the risk of abuse of its powers was rather muted in the cold war era because of the near paralysis induced by bipolar competition in the Council, the post-cold-war era and the monopolar world it has given rise to have brought home to the international community the risks inherent in the monopoly of power in the Council by one single State and have shown the vulnerability of this very important organ in the face of the attempts aimed at dominating it in contravention of Article 24 of the Charter which stipulates that the Security Council acts on behalf of all the members of the Organization. The Security Council has been used over the past five years as a cover for practices that have flown directly in the face of the principles of the Charter. The Security Council has made it possible for the State that holds sway over it, along with its allies, to use their military might to destroy Iraq's infrastructure and, thereby, to push Iraq back into the pre-industrial age. A sanctions regime has been imposed upon Iraq which contradicts the principles of human rights and contravenes the very definite goal of the measures included in Chapter 7 of the Charter.

Suffice it, by way of an example, to give thought to paragraph 21 in S/RES/678 (1991). That article concerns the conditions of lifting of sanctions imposed on Iraq. That particular paragraph linked the reduction on lifting of the said sanctions to the policies and practices of the Government of Iraq, including the implementation by Iraq of all relevant resolutions of the Security Council. How could a comprehensive regime of sanctions be imposed with such ambiguous terms for the eventual lifting of the sanctions, especially when we take into consideration the fact that those comprehensive sanctions have claimed, to this date, the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians as a result of the shortages of foodstuffs and medication they have caused.

In addition to the situation in Iraq, the past five years have seen practices by the Security Council that have been far removed from the role envisioned for it in the Charter. We have seen the Council sending warships to a people, such as the Somalis, who have been in the grip of famine. By contrast, we have seen it stand by, as spectator, in the case of another country that is the victim of the crime of genocide, as in Rwanda. We have seen it impose sanctions on another country, namely, Libya, under the pretext of an allegation that, to this date, remains unproven, while it turns a deaf ear to the calls by that country and by regional organizations to seek an acceptable solution to the problem. These few examples, out of many others, point squarely at a credibility crisis, a legitimacy crisis and, also, at a moral crisis that beset the Security Council at present. Such crises have reached such a point that the measures adopted by the Security Council have become the cause of controversy between the legislative and executive branches of government in some States that are permanent members of the Security

Council. Certain of those branches find that the Security Council's measures are illegal and should not be enforced while other branches take the opposite view.

This bitter reality makes it necessary to comprehensively review the Security Council's composition, its procedures and methods of work as well as its relations with the other organs of the United Nations so as to restore that body's proper role as defined in the Charter, namely that of a tool used by the international community to maintain international peace and security.

My delegation is of the view that reforming the composition of the Council and reforming its procedures and methods of work are two faces of the same coin. They cannot be treated as separate issues, neither could one of them be given priority over the other. Reforming the Council's composition is required in order for the Council to be truly representative of all the States Members of the United Nations. This could be achieved only through expanding the Council's membership in accordance with the principle of equitable geographic distribution, with due regard to the aspirations and interests of developing countries, which make up the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations. In this connection, my delegation fully supports the proposals regarding increased membership put forward by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as contained in document A/49/965.

On the other hand, reforming the working methods of the Security Council and its relations with other United Nations organs constitute the other face of the coin of the reform process. My delegation believes that the following matters acquire particular importance, in relation to any genuine reform of the Security Council.

First, steps must begin to be taken towards limiting the use of the veto power in preparation for its eventual abolition, as it is a non-democratic privilege that runs counter to the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

Secondly, the Council's relations with the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice should be improved. Participation by these two organs in the decision-making process within the Council should be ensured. The roles of both the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice should be revitalized in dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, to resolving international disputes, and to preventive diplomacy. This would lessen the need for intervention by the Security Council, particularly considering that the supreme deliberative organ of the United Nations is the General Assembly, responsible for decision-making in the United Nations system. Regional organizations too must be afforded the opportunity of using their mechanisms in trying to find appropriate solutions to disputes between their members. This would promote the role of those organizations and enhance their independence. Moreover, it would be appropriate to consider the setting up of a mechanism to ensure the accountability of the Security Council *vis-à-vis* the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice in order to avoid selectivity, double standards and narrow interpretations in the Security Council's handling of international problems.

Thirdly, the Security Council's rules of procedure should be amended in order to ensure democracy and transparency in its functioning, make it possible for the Member States to participate in the decision-making process and the adoption of resolutions, and allow States that are non-members of the Council to participate in its informal consultations. Participation by Member States in the decision-making process would give tangible form to the principle that stipulates that the Security Council acts on behalf of all the Member States and, thereby, ensure for its resolutions the respect of the whole world.

It is also necessary to improve the methods of work of the Council's subsidiary bodies and their relations with the Member States of the United Nations. Here I should like to mention specifically the need for the Sanctions Committees to abide by the principles of democracy in carrying out their tasks and the need for those Committees to enable the States concerned to attend their meetings and to make the complete minutes of their meetings available to all Member States.

Fourthly, a machinery should be set up to lessen the need to have recourse to the mechanisms of Chapter VII by the Security Council. In this respect, consideration could be given to the proposal that resolutions by the Security Council on military intervention or the imposition of sanctions should be approved by a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly in order for such resolutions to have the necessary international support.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that the extreme importance we all attach to reforming the Security Council requires us all to persevere and to take advantage of the momentum that has emerged from the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary in seeking to achieve the desired objective. However, this must not

lead us to impose an artificial ceiling, in terms of time, for the completion of the Working Group's task, so that we may fully benefit from the mature consideration of reform proposals that would respond to the aspirations of the international community with regard to the Working Group's endeavour.

Mr. Reyn (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: Exactly two years ago, during its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly established a Working Group to consider all aspects of a reform of the Security Council and an increase in its membership.

During those two years, the Working Group accomplished an important task — all are agreed on that — in particular during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. In this connection, we should like at the outset to thank and congratulate Chairman Essy and above all the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Pibulsonggram, for the manner in which they guided our work and in particular for their assessment of it. The discussion within the Group allowed delegations to make clear their views on reforming the Council and to better understand those of others. Proposals were put forward, some individually and others collectively.

We cannot, however, deny that important differences of opinion persist. How could it be otherwise in view of the complexity of the issue, its sensitive nature and, above all, the importance we all attach to it?

With other countries that have a similar view regarding the reform of the Security Council, we distributed, within the Working Group, a discussion paper setting out the framework of principles on which, as we see it, reform of the Council should be structured. This paper was issued by the Secretariat at the end of the forty-ninth session in a compendium of proposals, as members are well aware. I shall therefore not enter here into the details of the reform principles contained in that discussion paper; some of my colleagues have in fact already done so. I should like merely to reiterate that this discussion paper constitutes a flexible and open framework that can be adapted to the ideas that will be put forward in the forthcoming consultations by the Working Group. This discussion paper does not constitute a rigid or definitive framework, but, I repeat, a framework of principles on which to base our discussion.

At the beginning of next year, the Working Group will resume its work. Differences of opinion doubtless will remain for a long time. But we have a choice: we can pursue this explanatory phase of our work and perhaps reaffirm our positions without making any genuine progress towards a solution, or we can, at the appropriate time, engage in an exercise of genuine negotiation. In describing this choice, I do not wish to seem unrealistic. I do not mean, for instance, that we should set a rigid time-table; that would not be very realistic. But, I wish to point out that in our view an exercise in rhetoric can no longer be of any real use to us. If we have the will to carry out the reform of the Council — and I believe that this will does exist — then doubtless we will gradually have to change the spirit of our work.

Changing the spirit of our work may not necessarily pave the way to a quick solution. But we may be able to take firmer steps in that direction.

The only point of reforming the Council is if it leads to improvements in all aspects of the Council's activities, not to retrogression. We cannot allow ourselves to damage this essential United Nations organ. Let us have no illusions: any reform that undermined the Council could lead to the emergence of ad hoc parallel systems which would be beyond our control. Accepting the urgent need to improve the Council clearly does not preclude efforts to decide, by consensus, on the kind of improvement we wish and on how to implement it. This is the spirit which, in our view, should guide our future work.

In my brief statement today, I wanted above all to describe my feelings and our feelings about the spirit rather than the substance of the work we will have to resume next year. We have certainly come too far to turn back. Our work may not yet be sufficiently ripe for reform. We must, nevertheless, continue our efforts, with transparency, in a spirit of consensus, and above all with the will to achieve a realistic reform of the Council that can best serve our common interests.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): In the months preceding the present discussion, the Open-ended Working Group was charged with examining the "Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters". It heard the many and varied views of delegations. My delegation would like to congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen on the manner in which they conducted those proceedings. In this regard, we should also like to express our gratitude for their efforts in producing the compendium of observations and assessment of the two Vice-Chairmen

contained in document A/49/965. The collation in this document of proposals and other documents presented to the Open-ended Working Group is a useful tool. It is our understanding, however, that delegations are still free to present new or additional ideas to the Open-ended Working Group when it reconvenes.

It is crucial, however, that as we move forward in this debate we conduct our affairs in an open and transparent manner. The spirit of resolution 48/26 demands that all Member States, large and small, have an equal opportunity to contribute in an open-ended setting to this question.

Allow me to make a few observations of a general nature with respect to this question.

It is common knowledge that the world within which we find ourselves today is greatly changed from that of just 10 years ago. As a result of these changes, the international community is provided with a favourable environment within which the United Nations can be refashioned to meet the present challenges. The issue demands our concerted and sustained efforts to ensure that it is addressed properly. We must place it, in practical terms, among those issues which occupy a strategic place on our common agenda.

The principal objective of the United Nations remains the maintenance of international peace and security. The challenge to the international community in achieving this objective is to address the root causes of underdevelopment, poverty and hunger, lack of democracy, injustice, religious extremism and ignorance.

Within the overall effort to reform the United Nations, South Africa believes that the structure and functioning of the Security Council should be reformed to make it more representative, democratic and transparent. The product of our work must result in a Security Council that is effective and legitimate, and reflects the realities of our modern world. We believe that this result can be achieved only if our reform and restructuring efforts are dealt with as a package. One of the products of this reform process must be that Africa will have an equitable representation on any enlarged Security Council.

We all agree that there must be an increase in the membership of the Security Council. The questions confronting us are: by how many and in which categories? South Africa fully endorses the views of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that the increase should be both in the permanent and in the non-permanent categories. We believe that should there be an enlargement of the permanent membership of the Security Council, it should be based on the principles of equitable geographical representation. It should be up to the region concerned to select the countries that should fill those seats.

In other words, any increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council by the addition of countries from the developed world must be balanced by the addition of countries from the developing world. The size of any enlargement of the Security Council, taking into account the aforementioned principles, should not exceed a number beyond which the effective functioning of the Council is impaired. Any new permanent members added to the Security Council should have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with permanent membership.

My delegation believes this issue to be of vital importance to the United Nations and the evolving system of international affairs. We therefore fully support the draft decision in paragraph 17 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group contained in document A/49/47 and look forward to participating in the work of the Open-ended Working Group once it resumes.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): The Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Julio Londoño-Paredes, spoke yesterday on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on item 47, now before us. My delegation fully associates itself with his statement.

I should like to begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, who served as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their effective leadership. My delegation would like, in particular, to express its gratitude to the Vice-Chairmen for their contribution to the work of the Working Group and for submitting its report.

It is indeed gratifying to note from the Working Group's report that there is agreement that the Security Council's effectiveness should be strengthened through an increase in its membership in order to reflect more accurately not only the significant changes in the international landscape, but also the dramatic increase in

the membership of the Organization. Furthermore, there was tacit recognition of the need to review the Security Council's composition, as well as its working methods and other, related matters. On this basis, the Working Group has discussed a plethora of ideas and proposals that were submitted to it and has thus laid a solid foundation for further work towards reform of the Council.

In this context, the Non-Aligned Movement, at its eleventh Summit meeting, which was held in Cartagena, Colombia, last month, reaffirmed that both reform and expansion constitute integral parts of a common package, which should take into account the principle of the sovereign equality of States, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the Security Council's working methods and procedures.

The ongoing endeavours to reform and improve certain structures and procedures of the Security Council constitute an essential component in the strengthening of multilateralism. In this context, we have always emphasized that the Council should function on the basis of equality, equity and transparency — in representation as well as in its decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the role of the Security Council has grown substantially in recent years as its members have rediscovered a sense of common purpose in confronting manifest dangers to peace and security. But, even as we acknowledge the Council's belated fulfilment of its Charter mandate, we call for its reform to render it more representative and democratically accountable.

Indisputably, expansion of the Council's membership has become imperative in order to involve more States equitably distributed geographically, that are prepared to shoulder the burden of maintaining peace and security. It is also pertinent that the power exercised over the Council's decision-making by a handful of States named in 1945 calls for revision. Hence, the Council should undergo a process of review and revitalization to ensure its dynamic adaptation to the evolving realities on the international scene so that it can continue to play an effective role as the focal point for the management of the critical issues of our time.

It is undeniable that the present arrangements — especially the permanent membership — do not reflect either the current configuration of membership of the United Nations or the profound changes and transition that have taken place in the global arena. Consequently, we face the untenable anomaly that four of the five permanent members of the Security Council are developed countries, while developing nations are not adequately represented.

A review and reappraisal of the composition not only of the permanent but also of the non-permanent membership of the Council has become imperative as a result of the substantive increase in the membership of the United Nations over the past several years. The Council has become increasingly less representative of the general membership of the United Nations. The preservation by a few countries of privileged positions of power goes against the aim of democratizing the Organization and its structure and functioning.

The present situation touches on the basic mandate and representative nature of the Council, as set out in Article 24 of the Charter. While the developed nations have a monopoly on seven Council seats — permanent and non-permanent — the developing countries have to share seven non-permanent seats. Our endeavours should therefore be comprehensive in nature so as to provide equitable and balanced representation and to facilitate the participation of all States, to reflect the universal character of the world body. We earnestly hope that it will be possible to attain a ratio that will ensure the greatest possible degree of participation in the Security Council.

It is my delegation's view that, while the principle of equitable geographic representation is a valid basis, a host of other criteria can be deemed essential for assumption of the responsibilities inherent in permanent membership of the Council.

Far from paying mere lip service and making perfunctory exhortations, States must support the United Nations as the principal multilateral Organization through which Governments should seek to resolve conflicts peacefully and thereby seek to strengthen the validity and efficacy of its organs as forums for negotiations on issues of global concern. Such a stance must have the consistent support not only of Governments, but also of the peoples concerned for the Organization — most importantly, through timely contributions to its budget.

Furthermore, Member States' willingness to assume the onerous responsibilities inherent in permanent membership of the Security Council, and thereby bolster its capacity to fulfil its mandate, should have been convincingly demonstrated by their contributions to the promotion of regional peace and global security through successful diplomatic initiatives in the prevention and

resolution of conflicts, as well as by participation in peace-keeping operations over a period of time.

Additionally, a country's standing within the new realities of regional and subregional dynamism and its part in the building of an edifice of confidence and concord should be taken fully into consideration. It is also pertinent to take into account the legitimate aspirations of the largest States and their proven capacity to exert constructive global influence and to undertake global responsibilities. Of no less importance are contributions to resolving issues of global concern, particularly through compromise, cooperation and consensus.

Economic power — both current and potential — and social progress, as well as the capacity and willingness to make significant contributions to socio-economic development are also factors. Another central criterion is a record of strong and sustained economic growth that would make a country's economy one of the largest and most vibrant in the world.

It is also pertinent to take into account population, not just in quantitative terms but also in terms of quality and participation in the promotion of peace and security at the global and regional levels and in economic growth and development. It is from such strengths that a country's capacity to contribute to world stability and development cooperation under multilateral auspices is derived.

An increase in the membership of the Security Council should therefore accommodate new permanent members, which should join on the basis of a combination of these and other appropriate criteria, reflecting, among other things, the new and emerging constellation of Powers and their proven regional and global responsibilities, as well as political, economic and demographic realities.

A measured and realistic expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership, coupled with reform of the working methods and practices of the Security Council, has become necessary and appropriate. In these endeavours, however, the exclusion of developing countries, through a process of predetermined selection, would be unacceptable. Enlargement should be accomplished through a process of open-ended negotiations on the basis of consensus. Reform and restructuring of the Security Council are long overdue. It is now imperative that we achieve a more representative Council.

In conclusion, my delegation deems it essential for the Open-ended Working Group to continue its task of fulfilling the mandate entrusted to it under General Assembly decision 48/498. We therefore fully support its recommendation that it should continue its work during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. As in the past, my delegation will participate constructively in the ongoing discussions, in the firm conviction that an intensified dialogue and concrete negotiations leading to compromise and consensus will be in the broader interests of all Member States.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes continued consideration at the current session of the General Assembly of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, and has carefully studied the relevant report.

We have just concluded the Special Commemorative Meeting of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The past 50 years have witnessed tremendous changes in the world as well as remarkable changes in the United Nations, whose membership has increased from the original 51 to the current 185. The international community has placed greater expectations on the United Nations. The Security Council, which shoulders major responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security, is also faced with new problems and challenges. The Chinese delegation believes that a relevant and necessary expansion of the membership and reform of the working methods of the Security Council should be carried out to enable it to cope with changes in the international situation and meet the new challenges ahead.

Under Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Member States and therefore should be accountable to them in fulfilling its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Issues handled by the Security Council have a direct bearing on the interests of all countries, particularly those of the countries concerned and in the relevant regions. It is the general desire and request of the entire membership that necessary measures be taken to make the Council's actions and decisions better reflect the collective will of Member States and better safeguard their interests, particularly those of the developing countries, which make up an overwhelming majority of United Nations membership.

The Chinese delegation concurs with the statement in the report of the Working Group that the composition and size of an expanded Council should more accurately reflect the universality and current situation of the United

Nations. In expanding the Council, the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be particularly observed, and the representation of various regions in the Council strengthened, so as to give better play to the positive role of the developing countries and small and medium-sized countries in United Nations affairs.

The reform of the Security Council should also cover necessary improvements to the working methods of the Council to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency. First, the Council itself should establish the practice of democratic consultation, and members should refrain from imposing their will on others or applying double standards to conflicts in different regions. At the same time, the Council should increase the transparency of its work and strengthen its exchange of information and communication with non-Council members, particularly those directly concerned. This would help enhance the accuracy, effectiveness and authority of its decision-making. It also conforms to the current trend of democratizing international relations.

Thanks to the efforts of all Member States, including those on the Security Council, in recent years the Council has, on the basis of full consultations and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, adopted some specific measures to improve its working methods, with some positive results achieved. We hope that the Council will make further efforts to build on its accomplishments so far, so that its working methods can better reflect the will of the general membership, thus enabling it to carry out the mandates entrusted to it by the Charter in a more effective manner and to maintain and strengthen its positive role in international affairs in the new situation.

In recent years, all countries have attached great importance to the question of the reform of the Security Council. They have taken an active part in the relevant discussions and made some concrete suggestions. These discussions, in our view, are useful. They have enhanced understanding between States on the question of reform and helped bring about consensus on some issues. However, there are still divergent understandings and views among Member States on various specific issues concerning the reform of the Council. The suggestions made are not quite the same, and in certain areas there are fairly big differences. This shows that a serious, pragmatic and patient approach on the part of the entire membership is required to the reform of the Council if we are to continue an extensive exchange of views and seek common ground step by step. This is the only way to achieve the objective of the reform of the Council.

It is the hope of the Chinese delegation that the Open-ended Working Group will continue to work effectively during the current session of the General Assembly and to study carefully and meticulously, on the basis of previous discussions, all suggestions made by Member States so as to put forward a reform proposal acceptable to the general membership.

Mr. Keating (New Zealand): New Zealand is strongly in favour of reform of the Security Council, but, as we have said many times in the Working Group, simply changing the composition of the Council misses the point. The most important reform that must be made relates to the political culture of that body.

My comments on the expansion of the Council will be brief. We are convinced that the Working Group is now at a stalemate. It is clear that none of the alternatives for expansion of permanent membership are viable.

We believe we therefore have three options. The first is to find a graceful way to shut down this debate, put it aside for 10 or 20 years and get on with reforms that really will make a difference to the way the United Nations operates. The second is to pursue a simple expansion of non-permanent membership. The third option is to pursue a more complex political solution based on the extension of non-permanent seats only, but accomplished in a manner that will ensure that the relatively small group of major countries that are interested in regular representation on the Council at least have the possibility of election to it more often.

We believe that in the circumstances which the United Nations now faces — a financial crisis, a crisis of confidence and a desperate need for wider reform and revitalization — it is time to face up to reality.

We all have optimal positions. New Zealand, for instance, strongly believes in the elimination of the veto, and we could go on insisting in the Working Group that this position be accommodated in any Charter amendment that might be forthcoming. However, we have to face reality. Even if the Working Group did accept the New Zealand position, the political facts of life are such that we know full well that such a Charter amendment would not be ratified by all the necessary legislatures.

Similar considerations apply to other countries' optimal positions. Who really, in their heart of hearts, believes that it will be possible for a package of five new permanent members to be ratified by the necessary legislatures? If we are being honest, the answer is that no one really believes it is possible. And equally we all know that the quick-fix package of two new permanent members is simply unachievable. It cannot gain the necessary two-thirds majority.

So if we want progress we all have to put aside our optimal positions for now. That is not to say that larger reform must be abandoned forever. We will continue to hope that one day it will be possible to eliminate the veto, and others will no doubt continue to harbour hopes for other more ambitious goals. But in the short term, we have to be responsible and not prolong indefinitely a debate which, if we go on the way we are, will bring the United Nations, and all of us as negotiators, into disrepute.

We believe that we need to find acceptable middle ground that can be agreed upon in a reasonable time-frame. That means compromise. And I believe that the only realistic compromise is one that expands the non-permanent membership by a sufficient number to accommodate the interests both of the smaller States and of the larger States that want, and probably deserve, to be represented on the Council more regularly.

Let us take the opportunity in this fiftieth anniversary year to focus on what is achievable instead of visualizing pipe dreams that are beyond our current reach.

Reform of other organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the subordinate bodies: all of this is on the table in the coming year. We will need to find realistic compromise solutions in each of those areas. Is it too much to hope for a realistic compromise approach on the Security Council as well? If we are not prepared to compromise in the area of Security Council reform then it augers very badly indeed for the prospect of reform in other areas.

Finally, I want to turn to the question of the culture of the Security Council: the way it operates. As we all know, the Charter envisaged that any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the Member considered that its interests were specially affected.

But what happens in practice? The Security Council currently considers a large number of questions which the broader membership, even when they believe that their interests are specially affected, have no real opportunity to participate in. In fact the Council does not have discussions which are open in any meaningful way to the other Members of the United Nations. The most that can be said is that it engages in exchanges of public explanations about actions already choreographed in private. This was why, when New Zealand was recently a member of the Council, we pursued so assiduously the goal of transparency in the methods of the Security Council.

We are on record in the public debates of the Council, and in the documents and proposals we submitted to it, as considering that the Council could, and should, amend its processes so that there can be meaningful input, for instance through a working group, by Member States affected by a situation, so that neighbouring and regional States can participate in an appropriate manner and, finally, so that troop-contributing States can, as the Charter says, participate in decisions as well as in discussion of relevant issues.

The Council has made some reforms. These were welcome. But it is our impression that in recent months, on all these fronts, things have gone decisively backwards. The consultations with troop-contributing countries have become increasingly threadbare. The Council decision to enhance transparency by holding "orientation debates" seems to have been stillborn.

We call on the members of the Council — while the spirit of United Nations reform is in the air, and when the General Assembly has set up an open-ended working group to look at reform on its side of the House — to respond in a similar way. Now is not the time for the Council to pull the blanket over its head and keep on doing whatever it does in the dark. Now is the time for the Council to consider new ways and new ideas. Can we suggest that the Council establish its own high-level working group, and that the group meet in public in the Council Chamber and invite all Members of the United Nations to participate in discussion of practical measures to improve the relationship between the Council and all the rest of us?

Mr. Maximov (Bulgaria): The Bulgarian delegation joins all other delegations in expressing appreciation for the untiring and constructive efforts of Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Pibulsonggram of Thailand,

Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Bulgaria shares the opinion that the ongoing discussion on reform of the Security Council in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group is of utmost importance for the future of the United Nations. We are ready to continue to make an active contribution to this important exercise. It is our strong belief that the spirit of cooperation prevailing in the international community will make it possible to reach consensus solutions enabling the Security Council to meet the challenges of the new times in the most effective and efficient way.

Mr. Huaraka (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

An enlargement of the Security Council should be aimed at enhancing its capacity in the sphere of maintenance of international peace and security. We support the search for an appropriate balance between the need for an increase in the membership of the Council — because of the growth in the number of United Nations Member States over the years — and the requirements for effectiveness and efficiency in its work. In this process, it is necessary to ensure that the number of non-permanent members is increased in a fashion that will preserve, on the one hand, the ratio of permanent to non-permanent members, and, on the other, the broad representation of the regional groups.

In practical terms, this should ensure that States carrying considerable weight in international political and economic life, such as Germany and Japan, as well as other influential countries in regional or global terms, could assume the responsibility of permanent status in the Security Council.

An additional non-permanent seat should be allocated to the Eastern European Group. In this connection, it would be appropriate to recall that this regional group exactly doubled its membership since the last enlargement of the Security Council, in 1965, while the overall membership of the United Nations over the same period has increased from 113 to 185.

We welcome the steps undertaken by the Security Council towards improving its working methods, aimed at an increase in transparency and wider involvement of non-member States. This momentum should be furthered by devising mechanisms for taking into account the positions of neighbouring countries and States concerned at an early stage of the decision-making process. Possible contributions by regional organizations should also be envisaged, through appropriate arrangements.

The need for such consultations is most strongly felt when economic sanctions are considered. Additionally, it has become imperative to increase the transparency of the functioning of the Security Council sanctions committees.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm my country's readiness to continue to contribute actively to the important process of adapting the world Organization to the challenges confronting it, of which the reform of the Security Council is a major element.

The Acting President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Viet Nam has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday at noon, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Viet Nam in the list of speakers?

I hear no objection. Viet Nam is therefore included in the list of speakers.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The fundamental purpose of reviewing the membership and working methods of the Security Council is twofold: to enhance the representative character of the Council and to make it more effective, transparent, legitimate and democratic. The reason for this endeavour is plain and simple: we live in a new world. The world gradually changed in the first four decades of operation of the United Nations, but it has been significantly altered in the last decade.

During the past year, in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other related matters, there has been a thorough discussion of the whole issue. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group for their tireless efforts in this difficult exercise. The final report of the Working Group, which was adopted at the end of the last session of the General Assembly, referred the work of the Group to the Assembly at its current session and accurately highlighted the fact that further in-depth consideration of the key issues is still required.

In fact, the task of reviewing the composition and working methods of the Council is a very delicate and complex one, simply because all members of the Organization would be affected in one way or another by the results, and, therefore, their participation and involvement in the process is of the utmost importance.

It is in this context that transparency in the *modus operandi* of the Working Group itself becomes extremely important, and even essential, so that there will be a sense of universality in respect of the final decision of the Working Group.

We all agree that the task before the Working Group is as important as it is difficult: it aims to reconstruct the Security Council in order to bring its activities into line with today's realities. A task of this magnitude requires strong political will to avoid haste and slipshod work throughout the process of deliberation in the Working Group. Therefore, we should not lose heart if progress in the Working Group has been slow and limited.

Reflecting the deliberations in the Working Group, the final report points out that

> "important differences continue to exist on key issues before the Open-ended Working Group". *(A/49/47, para. 16)*

In our view, reflection, deliberation, methodical work and, above all, time are needed to narrow the divergence of views on these issues. We appreciate the fact that, in the meantime, the Security Council has not been aloof to the climate of change and has taken some incremental steps to improve its working methods. We believe that such steps have been insufficient and that there is still plenty of room for improvement in the Security Council's working methods, in the light of the suggestions and proposals introduced in the Working Group and the General Assembly at its current session.

In our view, the fact that the two clusters on the agenda of the Working Group are finally a package should not be construed as meaning that progress in one cluster is technically dependent on simultaneous progress in the other. Were this to be the case, then one cluster would be held hostage by the other — a trend that should be avoided.

Holding on to privileges granted to the victors of the Second World War is no longer justifiable. Even 50 years ago, these privileges were challenged. The veto power, which permits a permanent member of the Council to defy the will and aspirations of the majority, is incompatible with the objective of democratizing the United Nations. Indeed, this power calls into question the very notion of collective security measures and their justification.

To be in line with the reform of the United Nations, the veto power should not be retained as it is now; it must be either removed or, at least, thoroughly reviewed to ensure that the decision-making procedure in the Security Council is democratic.

Finally, for the sake of brevity, my delegation has here confined itself to a few important issues. My delegation's position on different aspects of the issue under consideration has already been expressed in various meetings of the Working Group, as well as in other forums. But I would like to repeat my delegation's pledges of full cooperation in the work of the Open-ended Working Group in the future.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I wish to start by expressing our appreciation of the fair, impartial and expeditious manner in which Ambassador Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Pibulsonggram of Thailand, conducted the comprehensive debate undertaken during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in the Open-ended Working Group on Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

We trust that under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Freitas do Amaral, the Working Group will be able to converge towards concrete results in the course of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, on the basis of the wide ground already covered. In this connection, I wish to express our strong support for the work performed under the guidance of the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand as co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, and to stress the vital need for continuity in our deliberations.

The Working Group has now met for two consecutive years. We have before us its second report, document A/49/47, which includes a draft decision proposing that the Open-ended Working Group continue its deliberations and submit a report before the end of the fiftieth session. Our discussions point to agreement on the need to expand the Security Council and to review its working methods in a way that further strengthens its

capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency.

Although we have yet to reach consensus on some of the central issues under consideration, the detailed exchange of views in the Working Group itself, as well as the very useful consultations organized by the two Vice-Chairmen, have helped to clarify positions and focus our discussions.

The previous report of the Working Group had concluded that while there was a convergence of views that the membership of the Security Council should be enlarged, there was also agreement that the scope and nature of such enlargement required further discussion. Further discussion has now taken place, and the thrust of the ideas and opinions on the issues related to the Council's expansion, as well as those which might be said to fall under the heading "Other matters", have found adequate reflection in the Observations and Assessment by the Vice-Chairmen on the progress of the Working Group's activity, annexed to the report.

The observations illustrate the fact that an extensive exploration of the two clusters of issues took place during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. There should be no need to go over territory which is sufficiently well mapped. The moment has thus come for building bridges and working towards an agreement.

The Brazilian Minister of External Relations stated at the opening of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly:

> "As a catalyst for other much-needed reforms within the United Nations system, reform of the Security Council is an imperative that should no longer be put off." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 5)*

And he added:

> "Reform is not about the individual prestige of any country but about the prestige of the Security Council itself." *(ibid)*

We agree with the President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly that reform of the Security Council is required and urgent, as he pointed out in his thought-provoking inaugural address. Reform, however, should not be pursued for its own sake. It should serve the needs and further the interests of the international community. In our view, the kind of reform capable of meeting these requirements is one that brings greater legitimacy to the Council and enhances its capacity for effective action by making it more representative of the world we live in.

If the Security Council is to wield the political and moral authority needed for its decisions to be effectively implemented, its composition cannot be perceived by the general membership as imbalanced either in geographic terms or in terms of participation by industrialized and developing countries. If the post-cold war United Nations is to fulfil the promise of creating a true global partnership for peace, the organ responsible for safeguarding international peace and security must be perceived as equitable, both in its permanent and in its non-permanent membership.

An increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council limited to industrialized countries would not only aggravate present imbalances in regional terms, but would fail to acknowledge the increasing role played by developing countries in promoting peace and enhancing security.

International relations have undergone significant changes in the past five decades, with the emergence of new political and economic Powers with a global reach. An increase in the Council's membership that fails to deal with these realities cannot be called a reform. A reform that fails to contemplate developing countries as permanent members cannot be called equitable.

Brazil supports the draft decision included in document A/49/47, which proposes that the Working Group should continue its work, taking into consideration progress achieved during the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions as well as the views expressed during the fiftieth session, including the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary.

As President Fernando Henrique Cardoso declared during the Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary:

> "I ... reaffirm the Brazilian commitment to fight for a stronger, more active United Nations. This is not a new commitment, but one that reflects the history of Brazil's participation in this Organization. It has been a history of engagement, a history of the pursuit of peace and development, a history that makes us willing now to assume greater responsibilities in the deliberations of the United Nations." *(Official Records of the General*

Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 37th meeting, p. 15)

This is the spirit which will continue to orient our participation in the debate on the reform of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): My delegation appreciates the resolve which the President of the General Assembly expressed at the outset of his presidency to give this important question his most careful attention.

The Open-ended Working Group made useful progress during the last session in preparing the groundwork for reform of the Security Council. We owe sincere gratitude to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, who steered its discussions with great skill and commitment, and we warmly thank Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Pibulsonggram. As they themselves have pointed out, much remains to be done before a comprehensive agreement can be reached among all Member States. We have the opportunity and responsibility to ensure that we make the maximum use of this fiftieth anniversary session to bring matters to a point where essential decisions to be made are clear.

I do not intend to rehearse again here the position of my delegation on the principal issues of substance. That position was made clear in a discussion paper which we submitted, together with a number of other countries, to the Open-ended Working Group at its last session. Those views are contained in section V of document A/49/965 of 18 September 1995. We have always made it clear that, based on certain fundamental points of principle, we will take a flexible attitude to various aspects of the issues as they evolve, taking full account of the views of other Members. And the representative of New Zealand has just reminded us forcefully of the virtues of this approach.

In the general debate at the outset of this fiftieth session, of the General Assembly, the *Tanaiste* and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland recalled the essentials of our approach, when he declared that the Security Council needed to be enlarged in order to increase its effectiveness and its ability to act, both clearly and unambiguously, as the expression of the common will of Member States. Enlargement should enhance the representative character of the Security Council, taking into account the emergence of new economic and political Powers as well as the increase in United Nations membership. It should also enhance equitable geographic representation and not diminish the possibility for smaller Member States to serve. Enlargement should take place in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

He concluded that after two years of discussion we have now reached the point where we should begin to clarify the elements of a balanced solution.

We all know that this question, because it addresses structures and procedures at the heart of the role and activities of the United Nations, requires decisions which are not simple to achieve to the satisfaction of all. At the same time, it is very clear that we need to advance reforms because there is evident dissatisfaction with matters as they stand. And as long as this situation continues — on an issue fundamental to the workings of the United Nations — we will not have the conditions of full confidence which should characterize the relationship between the Security Council and the general membership.

On the working methods of the Security Council, we should acknowledge that a number of steps have been taken over the past couple of years to improve openness and transparency in the Security Council's relationship with the wider membership. The Working Group has discussed a range of means to carry this process further. In the joint discussion paper, with which Ireland is associated, we suggested that an amendment of Article 24 of the Charter might recognize the principle of the Security Council's informing and consulting all Member States to the largest possible extent.

We suggested that the following should receive particular attention: briefings on the work of the Council by the President of the Council; open orientation debates of the Council — on this, an interesting French proposal was put forward in December 1994; improved consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries; and greater transparency in the work of sanctions committees.

The Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group have made a number of very useful suggestions for the organization of the future work of the Group during the fiftieth session. We subscribe to the approach they have outlined. In particular, we would like to see the work develop in such a way as to refine and focus views as far as possible, avoiding mere repetition; to structure the sequence of meetings to best effect; to use the momentum of the fiftieth anniversary to clarify in the

months ahead the essential points on which decisions and further measures could be realized.

At the outset of the Open-ended Working Group's activity at the beginning of this year, discussions were facilitated by a questionnaire suggesting main areas that might be addressed. We would suggest that it might be helpful if, taking into account the further useful clarifications achieved during the last session, a revised questionnaire, or a similar paper, were prepared to structure the outset of further work in this session.

To conclude, it is clear that there is a widespread view that the Security Council should be enlarged to meet changing circumstances and the reality of a significantly expanded United Nations membership. If this overall objective is so widely shared, its achievement cannot be deferred indefinitely without negative effect. We hope that this session can make decisive progress, and my delegation will continue to seek to contribute to that end.

Mr. Zandamela (Mozambique): The Special Commemorative Meeting of the United Nations held last month constituted an excellent opportunity for us all, the family of the United Nations, to reaffirm our faith in the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of this Organization. In doing so, the peoples of this great family committed themselves to working together to make this institution truly the global depositary of mankind's values and aspirations.

It is within this perspective that my delegation deems it opportune to share its thoughts on the subject under consideration as we pursue the search for a common ground to attain the goals and objectives that will guide the United Nations throughout the next millennium.

The United Nations over the next millennium must consolidate the sweeping and innovative changes that are taking place across the world. It is within our power to reshape the Organization to bring it up to the dynamic condition commensurate with the challenges of a world characterized by tumultuous global changes.

The world leaders who came here to reaffirm the ideals of the founding fathers of our Organization recognized, in their wisdom, the need to reform the Organization accordingly. As President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique said in his address:

> "The reforms of the United Nations system are a logical consequence of the increase in the membership of the Organization and of the winds of democratization blowing across the world". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary meetings , 40th Meeting, p. 17)*

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council deserves thorough scrutiny in view of the lack of consensual criteria liable to embrace the political, geographical, economic and demographic interests of all Member States.

The observations and assessment of the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-Ended Working Group contained in document A/49/965 and the various proposals submitted by a number of States Members of the Organization and contained in the same document underscore the need for further consideration with a view to harmonizing the compelling interests of Member States in this crucial issue.

At this juncture, while my delegation wishes to reiterate the validity of the African Common Position on the United Nations Reforms, adopted in September last year, we likewise wish to express agreement with the view of the Non-Aligned movement, as expressed by the representative of Colombia, that in view of the important differences that continue to exist in the Open-ended Working Group, further in-depth consideration of these issues is required.

We commend, however, the work done by the Open-ended Working Group, and in particular the dedication and tireless efforts carried out by the two Vice-Chairmen. We encourage the Group to continue to such efforts. My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its readiness to cooperate with the Chairman in the difficult task of harmonizing the various interests in the issue.

In conclusion, my delegation maintains the view that the concept of democracy, accountability, transparency and so forth, augurs well for our individual countries and could also do so in the international organizations of which we enjoy full membership, particularly the United Nations. We need, therefore, to see a more democratic, a more representative and a more efficient Council based on the sacrosanct principle of the sovereign equality of all its members as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Lamptey (Ghana): When I spoke on this item last year in this Assembly, I stated that the question was the qualitative exercise of power in the Security Council. I would now like to elaborate.

We have heard the various proposals offered for the reform of the Security Council. We have noted the zeal with which some important Members of this Organization are advocating the creation of a limited number of permanent seats for those nations they consider worthy. The underrepresented regional groups, such as ours, are calling for more regionally apportioned seats and the provision of permanent seats to the groups.

Ghana has no objection to these proposals and calls. Indeed, we believe that a more balanced geographical representation in the Security Council, in the real sense of the word, is long overdue. But to understand the issue more clearly and thus be able to find a solution that would be both just and lasting, it is necessary for us to go back to the very beginnings of the Security Council and the exercise of power within that organ, as well as to the practical reality of decision-making in the General Assembly itself in the early years of the United Nations.

Let us recall that in those years, marked by an acute ideological divide in the world, the membership of the United Nations, in all its organs, favoured the Western world. The West was assured of automatic majorities in all United Nations forums. Thus it was that the Soviet Union became the "nyet" representative in the Security Council. Isolated and with its back to the wall, the Soviet Union exercised the power of the veto on every conceivable occasion, totally oblivious of the condemnation of the West and the "malignment" by a hostile international press that felt it was engaged in the reckless use of power.

But as the liberation struggle across the continents escalated and more and more subjugated peoples achieved victory and independence, the membership of the United Nations swelled and its complexion underwent a dramatic transformation. A beneficial result of this transformation was that the Soviet Union was no longer alone on every issue. The era of automatic Western majorities had passed into history. The other side of the ideological divide was also able to influence decisions and, at times, obtain favourable majority support. With this, the Soviet Union almost abandoned the use of the veto power.

Today, the United Nations is composed of 185 Member States, and one would have thought that in this milieu every nation, big or small, weak or strong, would have the assurance that its views would be heard and could influence decision-making for the greater good of the entire membership; that every State could know, *ab initio*, that it could win some and lose some; and that persuasion and compromise would be the norm in decision-making, thus making the power of the veto unnecessary, if not obsolete.

But what do we see? We see a General Assembly that is emasculated, because there are no teeth behind its legislative decisions. We see a Security Council so transformed that the publicly held deliberative process that marked it for reverence in the past is no more. Today the Security Council is forever in closed-door consultations. It has become an elitist group whose decisions are often at variance with the general will of the membership of the Organization.

Trends in this Organization and in the world today are making the peoples of the developing world here represented nostalgic for the bipolar world of yesterday. Then, at least, they could count on their voices being heard by both sides and on efforts being made to respond to their concerns. In this climate and in this context, is the further elitism of the membership of the Security Council the answer? Would the creation of more permanent seats, even if coupled with the enlargement of the Security Council to respond to regional concerns, solve the fundamental problem, which is the democratization of power? Ghana does not believe so. Let me voice our conviction that not one country here represented, including even those that now dominate the Organization, is entirely satisfied with the current situation.

One of the greatest instruments for governance in the history of man is the Constitution of the United States of America. It has ordered a basically rural agrarian society of 4 million through the years, and it turned the Union into the greatest industrial giant of modern times, with a population of over 200 million. It withstood the travail and test of a destructive Civil War. It contained the sacrifices and pain of two world wars. Its guardians have engaged in conflicts in lands far away that have not met with the approbation of the general population of the American nation, thus leading to wrenching divisiveness in the body politic. The unending struggle for social justice and racial equality makes this land a continuing battleground. But through it all the United States remains one enduring Republic. Why?

The framers of the Constitution of the United States were wise men. At the very beginning they recognized that the captain of the nation they envisaged must have awesome powers to govern a nation of many states with differing and, at times, conflicting interests. Thus they provided appropriate powers to the Commander-in-Chief. Believers in democratic government that they were, they also saw the necessity of providing the legislative arm of government with equally enormous powers to temper those of the presidency, thus ensuring that no despot would take the nation to ruin. The Constitution provided that the representatives of the people, in Congress assembled, would deliberate, make proposals and enact legislation, which must then be assented to by the President to become law. If the President feels that the action of the Congress has been influenced by the passions and demands of the moment and could be inimical to the interests of the people or of the United States in the long run, he has the power to veto the bill and make it a nullity.

Then the finer point of democracy is reached. Serious negotiations are entered into and compromises arrived at that could lead to executive and legislative agreement ensuring that a bill more nearly meets the interests of all. If, however, the Congress, representing the national will, is convinced that the President is in error, then by a two-thirds majority vote it can override the presidential veto and turn the bill into law.

Experience shows that the American people, irrespective of continuing individual reservations and unhappiness over specific decisions thus taken, are largely satisfied and willing to yield to the common will. The Constitution of the United States shows us the way to democratize decision-making in the Security Council.

If Ghana, *arguendo*, were to be made a member of the Security Council and given a permanent seat on a regional basis, its exercise of the veto power would be influenced by its national perception of the issue at hand, even if it took into consideration the views of the African Group, bearing in mind that perceptions in the Group might vary. In short, the exercise of the veto power could be only national, not regional.

An increase in the membership of the Security Council, coupled with an arrangement of permanent seats ensuring regional balance, is a move that we must all support, even if we consider it only symbolic. It is untenable that one nation can have the power to frustrate the will of an Organization of 185 Member States. The increase in the membership of the Security Council should be the first point in a two-pronged reform. The second, and perhaps the more crucial point, is to provide that the exercise of the veto power could be overridden by the votes of a set number of the members of the Security Council.

Today, even small and poor countries such as mine are sharing the heavy burdens of war and peace. Our children have served the United Nations in many lands, on many continents. The least we have a right to expect is the democratization of the United Nations organ that has responsibility for war and peace.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council remains a particularly important and significant subject in itself, and even more so in the context of the present comprehensive process of reform, democratization and restructuring of the Organization. For these reasons, allow me, first of all, to express my delegation's appreciation for the work carried out by the Open-ended Working Group charged with studying the topic and particularly for the invaluable work of its two Vice-Chairmen, the representatives of Thailand and Finland, and for the constant support of the Secretariat. We hope that future negotiations within the Working Group will enable us to meet the objectives for which the Group was established by the Assembly.

Cuba believes that the necessary restructuring of the Security Council should be in line with the realities and demands of an Organization which, 50 years after its inception, has undergone profound changes in many respects. This should be done, first and foremost, by increasing the number of its members. Member States advocate the democratization of the system, and they aspire to enjoy equal participation in all spheres of the Organization through just and equitable representation in all the organs of the system, of which the Security Council is a fundamental part.

The new realities of this Organization also call for a revitalization of the General Assembly and, above all, the re-establishment of proper links between the Assembly and the Council enabling the former to conduct the necessary supervision over the latter, in accordance with the authority conferred upon it by the Charter of the Organization. In this regard, Article 24 of the Charter still proves to be relevant and valuable. The Security Council acts on behalf of all Members of this Organization, and it is to them that it must answer. The

General Assembly, the only universal body of the United Nations, has the duty and the right to be duly informed of the Council's activities and to make whatever recommendations it considers appropriate regarding its work.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group, the subject of the debate in this meeting, contains, among its many aspects, the various proposals put forward by delegations on the criteria and numerical variants that should govern the process of providing for equitable representation in the Council and increasing its membership. The proposals include that submitted by Cuba, which is based on the consideration that modification in the number of members of the Council should be in strict application of the principle of equitable geographic distribution in all categories.

Cuba supports an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council and believes that, whatever the formula, an increase in the number of permanent members should also take account of developing countries. Otherwise, there would be a greater imbalance in the composition of the Council. New permanent members from developed and developing countries should join the Council at one and the same time.

Regarding the total number of members of the Security Council, my delegation believes that one of the numerical possibilities is a membership of 23 countries, with the distribution of new permanent members as follows: 3 seats for Asia; 2 seats for Africa, in accordance with the decision of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); 2 seats for Latin America and the Caribbean; and 1 seat for European and other States. However, we would be ready to study, with full attention and flexibility, each and every proposal made in the Open-ended Working Group, since only a thorough and complete study can lead to the necessary consensus formula that would make it possible to proceed with the expansion of the membership of the Security Council, thus enhancing its legitimacy by increasing its representativity.

The delegation of Cuba considers that the representativity of the Security Council depends not only on the composition of its membership, but also on its working methods and procedures.

During the last few years, measures have been adopted to improve the degree to which States that are not members of the Council are kept informed. However, there is still much work to be done, particularly with regard to the institutionalization of reforms in the Council's working methods and procedures. This is the only way to ensure the necessary transparency and effectiveness of that organ. In our view, it would not be right to try to pit the concept of effectiveness against those of democracy and transparency. A largely undemocratic, non-transparent Security Council is not and can never be an efficient Security Council.

Of course, in this context, we still have the remarkable and anachronistic veto right, be it overt or covert. My country's position on this subject is well known to all.

The delegation of Cuba regards the process of reforming the Security Council as a package, the negotiation of which must not be hinged or contingent on the introduction of substantive reforms of the Charter. Many of the proposed reforms could be implemented through amendment of the Council's rules of procedure or through relevant General Assembly resolutions.

However, my delegation supports the proposal made by the representative of Colombia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, concerning the examination at the Movement's eleventh summit Conference, held recently in Cartagena de Indias, of various mechanisms for restructuring the United Nations, including the possibility of convening a General Conference to review the Charter, as provided for in Article 109.

In the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Working Group's mandate and the General Assembly's responsibility with regard to the process of reform and democratization of the Council are being renewed and reaffirmed.

The changed composition of this Organization calls for just and equitable representation in the Security Council. The problems of today's world cannot be solved without the democratic and active participation of all Member States, including the founding Members of the United Nations and the many States that are underrepresented in the Security Council but are, none the less, equally sovereign and equally committed to the future.

Only a Security Council that is representative in its composition, democratic in its decision-making and transparent in its procedures will be able to serve effectively the lofty purposes of the United Nations.

Mr. Koe Ntonga (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to express the views of Cameroon on agenda item 47, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", just as the speakers preceding me have expressed the views of their respective countries on this item.

This question is as old as the Charter of the United Nations, but it gained importance owing to regular and abusive use of the right of veto, which, virtually paralysing the Council and the machinery for the political settlement of disputes between States, epitomized until 1990 the period of the cold war and of East-West confrontation.

The issue is still relevant. The increase in the number of Member States to 185; the end of the cold war and the concomitant, regrettable radicalization of nationalism and group identity, which cause internal and inter-State conflicts; and the perverse effects of the economic and financial crisis on the democratization of institutions and on human rights — all these events and challenges highlight the urgent need to carry out a reform of the United Nations in general and of the Security Council in particular.

Our discussions are therefore of special interest just after the Heads of State and Government and other dignitaries and representatives of Member States, meeting here from 22 to 24 October last to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, called urgently for the Organization to be renewed in all its political, economic and socio-cultural aspects.

First raised in November 1979, during the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council was reintroduced in December 1992 and was embodied in General Assembly resolution 47/62, which was adopted by consensus. By its resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, the Assembly decided to establish an Open-ended Working Group charged with considering the question. The Working Group met several times in 1994 and has continued its work this year. We should like to express our satisfaction with the work accomplished thanks to the perspicacity and insight of the Chairman and members of the Working Group.

Without prejudice to the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations, my delegation would like to reiterate Cameroon's position on this entire question.

Any reform of the United Nations — particularly of the Security Council — depends, first and foremost, on the political will of Member States and on their commitment to undertake reforms and to apply the measures adopted by the General Assembly to that end. Moreover, because of the increase in the membership of the Organization — which now stands at 185 Members, compared with 113 in 1963 and 51 in 1945, while the number of Security Council members, originally 11, is now 15 — it is important to alter the membership of the Council to make it more representative of the international community.

Indeed, the equitable representation on the Council that we so desire must be in keeping with the principles of sovereign equality of Member States and of equitable geographical distribution, which are enshrined in the United Nations Charter. In this regard, Cameroon wishes to reaffirm that, whatever formula is adopted, Africa should be represented by two additional members, one in each category of Council membership.

It is obvious that any restructuring of the Security Council must include greater transparency in its working methods and an improvement in its relations with other bodies, the General Assembly in particular. The proposals on this subject made and submitted to the Working Group by the African Group and the non-aligned countries deserve the General Assembly's special attention.

However that may be, Cameroon — whose firm political will and unshakeable faith in the noble ideals of the United Nations were reaffirmed on 24 October from this rostrum by His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon — remains convinced that all the aspects of this important question will be considered and that consensus solutions will be found in accordance with the spirit of mutual understanding, dialogue and wise compromise that in recent years has marked the work of our Organization and characterizes international relations today.

Mr. Tejera-París (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Venezuela attaches great importance to the issue we are addressing today. We have stated our position on many occasions, stressing the need to seek more democratic approaches to the functions, powers and composition of the Security Council.

In this respect, we support the current restructuring process and specifically recognize the work of the Open-

ended Working Group that has been considering the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Its report reflects the Group's consensus on the need to expand the Security Council's membership and to review its working methods, although the proposals to that effect vary widely.

Venezuela unreservedly supports the expansion of the Security Council. We have already stated our position on the modalities and scope of that expansion. The composition of the Security Council must be changed to reflect the increase in the membership of the United Nations and to correct imbalances between the regional groups. We support an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent seats in order to establish a more proportional and representative relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. In this respect, we have expressed our support for a possible candidacy, that of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

During the Group's deliberations, other proposals have been made that are of great interest to our country. Moreover, we could possibly support the proposal made by the delegation of Italy, or a similar proposal, to establish a more frequent rotation of non-permanent members and an additional rotation that would guarantee a seat on the Council to those countries that have yet to be members of that organ.

As to the veto power, we reaffirm the position we have held since 1945, that it must be eliminated or regulated.

On other aspects that have been addressed, we concur with other countries that it is essential that we revise the rules of procedure concerning the Council's working methods in order to increase "transparency", as the current expression has it. For example, during his presidency of the Council, our colleague from Argentina initiated a daily briefing on the Council's work. We welcome this and other measures that the Council has adopted to increase its effectiveness, as well as the initiatives of other colleagues. Nevertheless, the reforms must go beyond the merely procedural or descriptive. It will be useless to increase transparency if the general public is unable to detect anything through the window-pane that is solid, just or respectful of the principles of the Charter.

Mr. Yassin (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to pay tribute to the efforts of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters.

We also wish to note the remarks, assessments and discussion papers available to us. We hope that these efforts will mark a starting-point in the process of reforming the Security Council and enhancing its desired role in the maintenance of international peace and security to allow it to cope with the new realities of our world today.

Any discussion of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations will be complete only if we address equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, as well as its composition and size, the principle guidelines for these, the proposed new types and categories of membership, qualifications for membership, methods for selecting members in every category and the overall size of an expanded Security Council.

The desired reform of the Security Council should be viewed in the light of the continued increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially from developing countries, and of the significant changes in international relations. It is worth noting that 79 Members of the United Nations have never sat on the Security Council and that 44 other countries have been elected once only. What is more, almost all these 123 Member States are developing countries, mostly from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

We see this as irrefutable evidence that Members of the United Nations do not have equal opportunities to work on the Security Council. Certain major States or advanced States are often re-elected. This means that the Security Council's membership is limited to some 28 per cent of the total membership of the United Nations. In one view it is unacceptable to try and entrench such a situation which virtually excludes members of the Non-Aligned Movement and developing countries, including the countries of Africa, from membership of the Security Council while the Council is supposed to act on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations. Unless the Council's activities are based on the broadest possible support and on equitable representation, its resolutions will not enjoy world-wide respect and, therefore, will not be effective.

The question of reforming the Security Council is critical to strengthening the United Nations, and is essential in responding to challenges in the international

arena. My delegation shares the views of the representative of Colombia who, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement called for the sort of balanced and equitable representation on the Council that would respond to the new realities and rise to the challenges of our times.

It is important that more serious consideration be given to the fact that certain countries tend to exercise some influence over the Security Council by virtue of the special status they enjoy on account of their right of veto. Therefore, any reform should reflect the interests of every Member State within the framework of the interests of the international community as a whole. Such reform should fully take into account the aspirations and interests of the developing countries in a manner that would enhance the capabilities and effectiveness of the Security Council, promote its representative nature, and improve its efficiency by heeding the following elements: first, the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations; second, equitable geographical representation; third, transparency in the decision-making process.

It might be useful in this context to stress the need to always focus on listening directly to the parties concerned. Perhaps the Council should listen in a formal meeting to the view of the United Nations Member States and conduct discussions with the countries concerned before it adopts resolutions on major items on its agenda. This should not, by any means, be a substitute for the Council's informal consultations, although we think that the present undue emphasis on these can lead to the marginalization of most Member States. It is necessary for the Council's rules of procedure above all to ensure transparency, and to promote this transparency the President of the Security Council could keep Chairmen of the regional groups informed in a systematic way about the Council's programme for the month and could issue brief reports following informal consultations.

The reforms we seek ought also to address other deficiencies in the Council's methods of work especially with respect to: defining in a transparent manner the nature of the issues before the Council; objective and effective review of the right of veto in such a way as to uphold the principle of democracy; and review of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, and revitalization of recent measures to strengthen that relationship and to improve the Council's working methods and procedures so as to enhance the Council's ability to fulfil its Charter mandate. Rectifying some of the imbalances in the composition of the Security Council is a collective responsibility that demands intensive and concerted efforts to ensure that the imbalances are addressed in a comprehensive fashion that would ensure the Council's credibility.

It is a well-known fact that all five permanent members of the Security Council belong to the northern hemisphere; any real reform of the Security Council must consider the question of the right of veto enjoyed by some members of the Council. In many instances, the veto poses a threat to the decision-making process; some members tend to use it in a non-democratic manner that runs counter to the principle of the sovereign equality of Member States.

The desired reform of the Security Council must be considered with the utmost care. It would not be wise to set artificial deadlines for the conclusion of this ongoing effort. There are so many things to do before we arrive at overall agreement amongst all Member States. Discussions thus far have revealed that many differences still exist on major issues before the Working Group. There is a continuing need for in-depth consideration of such matters. Expansion of the Security Council should be viewed in the framework of overall reform. Increase in the membership of the Security Council, improving its methods of work and other related matters should be considered as an integral whole: agreement should be reached on all matters relating to reform simultaneously. However, this should not impede progress in any area.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for the meeting.

Several representatives have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): In his statement this morning the representative of Libya challenged France, even if he did not name it, asserting that it was acting as a colonial Power with respect to certain Territories. My delegation strongly rejects the use of such language with regard to the situation of French Territories and Departments, which repeatedly reaffirm, through democratic procedures, their commitment to their status within the French Republic.

Mr. Manley (United Kingdom): I too wish to respond to comments made this morning by the

Permanent Representative of Libya. The British delegation does not accept the Libyan Ambassador's anachronistic view of Britain's relationship with its dependent Territories, or his false claims regarding the bombings of the Pan Am and UTA flights. Libya is well aware of what it needs to do to enable the Security Council to lift the sanctions imposed upon it.

Mr. Keene (United States of America): I take the floor to offer my Government's full support for the statements made by my French and British colleagues.

The remarks made today by the Libyan representative are but the latest episode in a campaign to try to distract attention from its own international obligations. These obligations were imposed on Libya by the Security Council; they are clear and unchanged. It would be a waste of this body's time for me to offer a point-by-point refutation of the charges we heard earlier today from the Libyan representative.

The facts on such matters as the status of Guam and the Virgin Islands speak for themselves. What we were really witness to this morning was yet another Libyan effort to divert attention from its own record of terrorism and from its own non-compliance with the will of the international community, as expressed in binding Security Council resolutions.

The sooner Libya takes the necessary steps to meet these obligations, the better.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): First, regarding what I said earlier today on the item under consideration when I referred to the question of the veto power and our criticism of this power, such criticism has been on record for a long time. I said also that there are certain Powers which enjoy the veto privilege while they continue to occupy the territories of others. If there is any objection to what I have said in this respect, I should like to refer those who object to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and, specifically, to document A/50/23, which is more eloquent than any amount of talk.

Secondly, regarding what was referred to by the delegation of the United Kingdom and the delegation of the United States namely, that these allegations which, according to them, we make in order to divert attention from what they call Libya's record which, they say, is one of terrorism, we think that all countries of the world, Members of this Assembly know full well the real reason which put us at the mercy of the Security Council. If it were not for the tyranny and arrogance of power, a problem like that of Lockerbie could not have been brought to the United Nations. This is a problem which we ourselves, as well as many other countries, have been exposed to, as many planes have been destroyed, sometimes by certain well-known States and responsible authorities. However, such problems have never been brought to the United Nations.

As regards the Pan Am problem, my country, up to this very moment, has not been found guilty of anything. All we have heard in relation to that incident is a suspicion that two Libyan Nationals might have been involved in the incident. No court has made any judgment yet. The way the three Western countries have sentenced my country has to do, first of all, with the arrogance of power and hegemony and with the old mentality that prevailed in the past, especially in the cold war era.

My country, as most members of this Assembly know, especially those who only yesterday were languishing under the yoke of colonialism, colonialism that most certainly was not Libyan, know that my country has never made a secret of the fact that it was giving them a helping hand. Indeed, we pride ourselves on the fact that many of the countries of our African continent have gained their independence with the help of the positive and considerable assistance extended to them. Thanks be to God, the peoples of those countries have gained their independence and their freedom.

As for the accusations that are being levelled at my country, the aim is to bring my country's political system to its knees and to impose upon us the choices of others. This will never be. The people of Libya have suffered under colonialism, have experienced displacement and have been victims to killings and humiliation. The people of my country have paid for their freedom with the lives of more than half their number. No one will be able to bring such a people to their knees. We believe that the solutions included in the Charter of the United Nations, especially under Chapter 6, could have solved any problem such as that of Lockerbie quite easily.

The solution lies in a fair above-board trial. We have no objection to sending the two suspects, tomorrow, to a fair and objective court. We agree to the trial under Scottish laws and before Scottish judges but at the seat of the International Court of Justice or at any other neutral place, away from the pressures, in order for the truth to be known. We are sure that then and only then will the truth be known.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.